The
COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XLIV October 4, 1946 NUMBER 25

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THE COMMONWEAL *is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index and Catholic Bookman. Founded by the Calvert Associates, Inc., in 1924, with Michael Williams as President and Editor.*

Published weekly and copyrighted 1946 in the U. S. A. by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. AShland 4-9685. Entered as second class matter February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. U.S. and Canada $6 a year, Foreign $7. Single copies 15c

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Muddle

THE STRANGE thing about the Wallace-Byrnes-Truman episode is that, whereas its political effect is quite sharply defined, the merits of the controversy continue mighty mysterious. Mr. Wallace for the time being is the American standard-bearer of the Russian cause—whether he likes it or not—and has suddenly won the quiet affection of what genuine, purely negative isolationism remains in our country. It is not the first time that we find communists and isolationists in an anti-British alliance.

But when we come to examine the precise differences between what Wallace preaches and Byrnes does, we enter an atmosphere of fog. In this fog, only one thing is clear. Mr. Wallace believes we should be nicer, more amiable, more friendly to Russia. And since the Russians themselves have created a he-who-is-not-with-us-is-against-us climate in politics (ably abetted in this doleful achievement by Mr. Roosevelt), we now find Mr. Byrnes labeled anti-Russian and Mr. Wallace pro. But what, in practical terms, does this mean? Although the President's handling of the Wallace affair has been incredibly inept, and the blame for the harm done must rest largely with him, his apparent initial belief that there was no vital issue involved, however psychologically and politically naïve, is not entirely beyond comprehension. La Guardia, days after the uproar began, was still failing to see what all the shooting was about. Since when, he asked, have we had a policy of being tough with Russia?

What on earth is the Byrnes foreign policy? It would seem to be entirely empiric, based on no clear principle whatever. By contrast Russian policy is crystal. In a general way we keep insisting on the free elections promised for Eastern Europe. We are annoyed when Tito shoots our planes down. We refuse to hand him Trieste on a silver platter. We have at last realized that the Morgenthau idea for Germany is tragically wrong. We do our best to avoid taking any position on Palestine. We are disinclined to pull out of China. We continue unhappy (though less unhappy) about Perón, happy about Bolivia, silent about Chile. We are now saying nothing whatever about Spain. We seem to have stopped extending credits to other countries. Does this add up to genuine toughness toward Russia? Is it not rather a picture of bargaining a little instead of yielding on almost everything? Does it reflect any principle whatever, even the ordinary one of enlightened self-interest?

Does Wallace offer anything basically different? If so, it is hard to see what. He indicated that he would let Russia do exactly as she likes in Poland and the Balkans, which she is doing anyway, so that the only change here would be to stop occasional protests. Would he give Trieste to Tito? Would he withdraw our troops from China? Is it his idea that we should never bargain but only yield? That is certainly not what he said. As one Frenchman has put it, the Byrnes policy might lead to war with Russia, but the Byrnes plus Wallace policy infinitely increases the likelihood of that catastrophe. It might convince Stalin that enough pressure will always make us yield.

The Byrnes policy, then, is a combination of muddling and bargaining. Can we expect much more? The two-thirds rule in the Senate makes necessary so overwhelming a degree of agreement among our people concerning any action we take in the world that a positive policy, based on a discernible principle, is probably impossible—at least as long as the vast mass of Americans are largely indifferent to the whole business anyway.

Our Military Life

AMERICAN army and military policy has an importance in the "Wallace incident" which neither army leaders nor many commentators have stressed. In fact, generally speaking, the

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army has been operating for a long while now with relatively little attention fixed upon it.

Avoiding enormous argument, and taking as given a policy of having a large and strong army, the public has a right to further interest. In the first place, a lot of money is spent upon the military, and armies are extremely fascinating organizations, so that just plain kibitzing is inevitable and makes a cheap enough return on taxes. And the army is by no means an exclusively military institution and the training it gives men is not exclusively soldier training. Different army organizations of equal technical and military power can turn out to be quite different things in the whole of public life.

It appears to us that one trend discernible is toward a "professional" type military establishment and away from the "militia" idea. The radio informs us, for instance, that the number of volunteers has practically reached one million. Before those terms of enlistment run out, plans call for an army not much bigger altogether than a million. Then we hear that the draft law has very little chance to last through the next session of Congress. All this would make a professional, long term army.

Two other pointers in the same direction are the neglect of the Reserve and the still small position of the National Guard. Already, the enormous reserve provided by the mass levies of the war, trained after all as well as the military could manage and experienced with the life provided by an army at war, has largely disappeared, or been dissipated into the indifferent civilian public. For practical, military purposes, it is hardly too much to say that as of now the country simply has no Organized Reserve. That appears to us wasteful on the military side and also on the citizenly side. The voluntary reserve should be kept in some touch with the army and be permitted to keep far better prepared than it has this last year. The possibility grows dimmer each year after demobilization from active service.

National Guards seem to be operating, but in an almost playfully small way. The various states don't seem to put any initiative or imagination, or any money, into it, and the communities too seldom seem to realize the possibilities involved in having and not having the National Guard. As things are set up now, it appears to be through the National Guard that a "militia," or "territorial," or "citizen-soldier" element could be kept alive to counterbalance centralizing and monolithic tendencies. The effective soldier of the future, it may be argued, will be the pale and lean laboratory specialist who tosses an atom or a vial of biological poison on the order of his boss, but certainly a more vigorous and freer civic ideal is a healthy man, able to take care of himself and his neighbors, respected by the tax collector, and pleased to keep shining the musket over the mantelpiece.

The Lost Continent

WE tried all through the war to hold an image of Europe in our minds, and in the darkest days of the war we stopped talking about the civilization of Europe which was threatened with death, or about France—if it was that country we loved—or about Italy, or about Germany—if two wars were not enough to make us not care if Germany died or not—and in those long days of war we reduced the image of Europe to the most simple elements; to roads bordered by poplars joining village to village with the fields surrounding the villages. We wanted to hold in mind what the field looked like which was being ravaged, the town—with the bridges over its river—which now was rubble. We wanted to remember Europe while Europe was concealed, in order to recognize Europe when visible once more, walking freely again in a world at peace.

The war ended, and there was no Europe to look at; no one spoke of Europe; people spoke of France, with not much interest; of Italy, with less; they spoke of Germany, but in terms of Russian power, or of coal; they did not speak of Europe because the image of Europe as a whole had been broken into bits and there was America and Russia and some scattered countries in between (also the sea).

It required a stronger mind than ours, a heart more constant, to hold that image of Europe which we lost—which Europe itself lost also—and a most ardent will to desire that it live again.

Winston Churchill speaking to the only Europeans who have remained Europeans, to the Swiss, shows now that mind, that heart, that will. He looks from Switzerland at "this noble continent comprising on the whole the fairest and the most cultivated regions of the earth, enjoying a temperate and equable climate [which] is the home of all the great parent races of the western world," and he sees that "over wide areas a vast quivering mass of tormented, hungry, careworn and bewildered human beings gaze on the ruins of their cities and scan the dark horizon for the approach of some new peril, tyranny or terror. Among the victors there is a babel of voices, among the vanquished a sullen silence of despair."

That is Europe now. Mr. Churchill's remedy? It is to recreate the European family, or as much of it as we can, and to provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom . . . "If Europe is to be saved from infinite misery, and indeed from final doom, there must be this act of faith in the European family

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and this act of oblivion against all the crimes and follies of the past. . . . I am now going to say something which will astonish you. The first step in the re-creation of the European family must be a partnership between France and Germany. . . . There can be no revival of Europe without a spiritually great France and a spiritually great Germany."

Mr. Churchill proposes a United States of Europe in which might "take their individual place" states and principalities of Germany, "newly joined together into a federal system." This great Englishman from that island outside Europe wants Europe to live again. He is perhaps the only man in politics who is thinking of Europe at all.

Food Prospect

OF ALL the national farm organizations none has given more thought to alleviating famine than the Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America (Farmers Union) with headquarters in Denver, Colorado. At the present moment they are distributing a ten-cent pamphlet by C. J. Coe of "Farm Research" entitled, "Food Now, or Coffins Later?" They recognize that in this pamphlet, dealing with the plight of the half billion men, women and children now on the very margin of starvation in many countries, Mr. Coe is "advancing his own political line." But they summarize and distribute it because it embodies "the basic facts."

Some of these are rather startling. The nations of the world are far from scraping the bottom of the barrel after all. For example: Britain last spring had double the amount of wheat in storage that is usual in peacetime; she has seized in Siam and was holding off the market 1,000,000 tons of rice; she was also holding up the release of 300,000,000 pounds of rice from Brazilian warehouses. Again, there were indications of huge industrial stockpiles of grains in the United States: certain industrial users have offered the government 2,000,000 surplus bushels of barley, while on June 30 the Department of Agriculture announced that it would turn over 6,000,000 bushels of corn to such processors as textile, leather and paper manufacturers. Argentina has been using grain for barter deals with her neighbors, and UNRRA has not had sufficient funds to buy the sizable surpluses of meat available in South America. No, we have not scraped the bottom of that barrel.

Mr. Coe's prescriptions are even more interesting. He advocates for this country: more effective price control and the restoration of rationing; sure support for farm prices that would reward abundance and encourage the family-size farm to all-out production; curtail during this critical period the non-essential industrial use of edible foods; replace *both* Herbert Hoover and Secretary of Agriculture Clinton Anderson.

On an international scale his program parallels many objectives of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Especially the establishing and publication of minimum standards for countries with food deficits. And the allocations required to meet these published needs, even at the expense of full-fledged rationing and food conservation in producing countries such as the United States. He is opposed to the use of food as a political weapon; yet even in Eastern Europe he would entrust distribution to the World Federation of Trade Unions. And he is all for the granting of loans without political strings together with the seed, machinery, fertilizer, etc., to rehabilitate producing regions ravaged by the war.

Such a program does not have to be realized at every point in order to achieve a marked improvement of the food situation in famine areas. The Farmers Union objective of a world food agency which would recommend to governments and appropriate UN agencies the food allocations found necessary is making headway at the FAO sessions at Copenhagen. This despite considerable opposition from certain American and British delegates. The immediate object is a sixteen-man commission which would meet in Washington under FAO auspices October 15. The evidence is ample that desperate as the food situation is in many areas, there is still plenty that can be done if governments, producers, processors and citizens really want it. That is the pity about how little there is being done.

More Jugoslav Justice

THE arrest of Archbishop Aloysius Stepinatz, Primate of Jugoslavia, charged with being an "enemy of the People" by the Tito party in power, is a culmination and not a beginning of persecution in the Jugoslav satellite area. In a pastoral which was written, strangely, just before his arrest, Archbishop Stepinatz made four appeals to the Government: "(1) Allow Catholic youth the education that the Church and Christian conscience demand. (2) Let flowery expressions of freedom of conscience and religion have their true meaning. (3) If freedom is given to the spread of materialism and ungodliness, let us have full freedom concerning those external truths that came from God and lead us to God. (4) We demand that the authorities truly respect our freedom of conscience and our religion in the full meaning of that word." The expected answer has come. Tito will put Archbishop Stepinatz through a Moscow-Mihailovich "trial." The character of the Jugoslav régime is past argument, and we join the Archbishop in prayer.

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Venezuela on Election Eve

The land of Bolívar the Liberator struggles to liberate herself

Rafael Caldera

THERE ARE really only two things about Venezuela that are generally known in the world outside: the fact of having given birth to Simon Bolívar, the Liberator, who gave nationhood to Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and what today is Panama; secondly, that Venezuela is today the second largest producer and the largest exporter of oil in the world. There are few people apparently who realize that our doleful country is a scene of extreme contrasts. Endowed with incomparably rich oil resources (exporting more oil than the United States and producing more than the Soviet Union) her people are ground down by the harshest poverty. The native land of a man who liberated six nations, Venezuela has been struggling for more than a hundred years to establish at home the liberty for which her sons' blood has been shed.

Our economic, social and political problems are so complicated that the younger generation, inspired by deep Christian sentiments, cannot remain indifferent to them. To take refuge in individual self-seeking would be more heinous here than in almost any other country. That explains why COPEI (*Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente*), a grouping of younger men with Catholic social principles, is today engaged in a painful struggle to restore to Venezuela confidence in herself, a Christian spirit and orientation in a definitely progressive direction.

On the 18th of October last year a sudden revolutionary uprising, which seemed to have failed, in the barracks of Caracas and Maracay, inaugurated a new political era. The next day General Isaias Medina, President of a government believed to be firmly in power but who himself no longer enjoyed any real public confidence, abdicated in favor of the youthful officialdom of the Army. The young officers, seeking to dissipate any thought that they had instigated this coup out of militaristic ambitions, entrusted the government to a revolutionary junta or coalition within which the Democratic Action Party had a clear majority; this party was at the time the chief organized opposition to General Medina. It had sharply criticized the former government for its abuses of power, the utilization of public funds for partisan ends and the force exercised by the Executive in favor of the Venezuelan Democratic Party which was a creature of his own making. The military and the Democratic Action Party promised the people that for the first time in our history we should have absolutely free and impartial elections. The people put their trust in this promise and in order to make it effective they organized into new political groups formed in accordance with the principal ideologies then current. My confidence in the Revolution led me to accept on the 27th of October the post of national Attorney General, an office which I gave up six months later.

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On the 15th of March the revolutionary government promulgated a series of guarantees. Even before that date private meetings to set up the new groups had begun to take place. The Venezuelan people have clearly indicated their desire that the promises of the Revolution be brought into being and today the question which we ask ourselves most anxiously is whether the Junta will carry out what it promised.

Popular enthusiasm aroused great hopes; then scepticism swept through the great masses of the people because of the poor record which our country has had in its elections. And that has brought about a state of things which Venezuela has never seen before. The communist leaders and those of the Democratic Action Party have brought to the discussion of ideas a tinge of terroristic violence. The communists are fearful of the triumph of a Christian movement with a spiritual base; Democratic Action is struggling hard to hold on to the power which it received from the hands of the Army. On certain occasions there have been bloody acts of terrorism: at the meeting held by COPEI in the Nuevo Circo of Caracas, attended by some 20,000 people, not only were stones and clubs resorted to by the saboteurs but three people were killed and many were wounded by gunfire without anyone to this day having identified the guilty. And all this after the Government had promised COPEI full guarantees of protection and our organization had notified the highest authorities of the threats made before the meeting.

But these terroristic acts, far from diminishing

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public awareness have greatly aroused the people's interest in public affairs. COPEI, which had been innocent of provoking the incessant attacks of Democratic Action and the communists ("adecos," as they are commonly called), has been growing at a dizzy pace. Its rolls increase from day to day and impartial observers believe that COPEI will win the elections if the Junta fulfils its promise of holding honest elections free from compulsion of any sort.

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These elections are fixed by the Junta for October 27th of this year and that is why it is of current interest to know something about this political group, COPEI, about which everyone is talking. Why is it that the streets of Caracas and other principal cities of the Republic have their walls inscribed anonymously by night with such slogans as "Death to COPEI" or "Long Live COPEI?"

COPEI means literally nothing but "Committee on Political Organization for Independent Elections." In fact it was a group organized by those who wanted a political setup which would embody the representation of all the groups in the Republic. Originating with such modest ambitions it aroused the enmity of the communists, who subjected it from the outset to the harshest propaganda. For the communists, naturally, COPEI—as the French MRP or the Italian Christian Democratic Party of de Gasperi or the Chilean group of Leyton, Garreton and Frei —is a "reactionary" alignment of forces. For Catholics COPEI is a group which is clearly and definitely progressive. We uphold and defend the social encyclicals; support laws which favor the workers and above all seek a far-reaching reform so that the Venezuelan proletariat may enjoy a more human condition of existence. I myself, for instance, had the honor in 1936 to collaborate actively in preparing the Labor Law which is still in operation (the eight-hour day, freedom to organize collectively, the right to strike, mediation and arbitration in industrial disputes, social security, annual vacations, working conditions providing for safety and health, etc.), to be the first representative of Venezuela in the International Labor Office, and at present to occupy the chair of social and labor law at the University of Caracas.

This social reform we seek in the interests of peace. Peace between social classes, between Venezuelans of different regions and different ideologies, and between Venezuela and the other nations of the world. The peace which will result from the triumph of Christ in the universe, for without it there will be only hatred. That is the fundamental difference between COPEI and Democratic Action or the communists: their meetings and propaganda are devoted to arousing some Venezuelans against others; we, on the other hand, victims of many attacks, continue to assert that only through harmony and the uniting of all Venezuelans can the regeneration of Venezuela be achieved.

Indeed this watchword, in appearance idealistic, is the only basis for the salvation of Venezuela, a country which, for instance, in spite of her only 4,000,000 inhabitants, fails to produce what is necessary for her own sustenance. From the United States she imports not only machinery but powdered milk, canned food, carrot and tomato juice, women's hats and garments, oranges and apples. From Europe, before the war, many things were imported in exchange for coffee and cocoa; today a great deal is imported from Chile and Argentina. Production is weak. Agriculture is unprofitable, neither the workers nor the man who sets up the small industry which is sometimes maintained solely by the protection of a tariff is able to make a go of things. The only people that do well are the oil men, government functionaries and middlemen (professional or commercial). Increased production is essential, and such production, in addition to the official protection which a state enriched by petroleum royalties must in all justice accord it, demands a *state of mind.* This attitude will develop not through a guarantee of limitless profits but through the assurance of security, which is the work of peace. Peace of conscience and in the heart; peace because of reform and progress; revolutionary peace; progressive peace; not the sort of imposed peace which the prisons and the repression of General Juan Vicente Gomez achieved in Venezuela for twenty-seven years.

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The royalty from petroleum, source of a number of fortunes, has brought on terrible inequalities, some of them difficult to avoid. To oil in large part is due the disparity between the currency maintained by the Government at a rate of exchange high enough to assure itself sufficient revenue and the low national purchasing power. Therefore all the talk of the duty of the Government, enriched as it is at the expense of impoverishing many Venezuelan lines of business, to devote the greater part of its wealth to the protection of productive activities. All the more so because the petroleum may give out. For this reason Alberto Adriani, our late-lamented economist and statesman, spoke of the necessity for plowing back into genuinely productive enterprises the profits from our oil.

Our love of peace is radical, profound. Immigration, for example, constitutes for us, as it does for those who have concerned themselves

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with Venezuelan problems for any length of time, a basic necessity. During the past few years there has been the ridiculously low figure of a thousand immigrants annually in a country which gives birth to 60,000 infants every year. While we are desirous of immigration, we wish especially the sort of immigration which is spontaneous or voluntary, the sort whose effects would be felt most rapidly, as they were in the United States, Canada, Argentina and Brazil. The reason we have done so badly is partly because of the obstacles which bad Venezuelan governments have placed in the way of immigrants and partly by the fear which the same bad governments inspired in potential immigrants. In this matter the establishment of confidence in the country would be the chief remedy: since the unexploited possibilities of our land can easily be developed even in these days when immigration has been made so difficult and complicated for great numbers of people.

Progress, of course, that progress which we aspire to so ardently, is the fruit of peace. Not of the peace imposed by tyrants, but that peace which abides in the human heart. That peace which Christian life alone can give.

Therefore, because Christianity embodies peace with justice, it conflicts with those who seek a false objective of justice with hatred as the means. Hence the communist groups in Venezuela, although officially they claim to be indifferent in religious matters, lose no opportunity to attack priests, brothers, nuns, and other Catholics seeking the realization of their ideals. Democratic Action, although not officially marxist nor constituted exclusively of a single social class, is led by men of marxist conviction; it also opposes the Church officially. Since that party has been in power it has tried to give the impression that it sympathized with and protected the Church, but every time the Church was involved in a question of importance the party has consistently exerted its influence in a contrary direction.

It has long been an aspiration of the Church, for instance, to free itself of the yoke of ecclesiastical patronage that the State imposed upon it on the basis that the State in Venezuela was heir of the Catholic kings of Spain. On this basis the President and Congress nominate the bishops and archbishops. The Holy See has never formally recognized this manner of doing things, which has resulted on occasion in the expulsion of Venezuelan bishops. Venezuelan Catholics want a Concordat (a word which in marxist parlance has tragic configurations) by means of which the Church and State would regulate their mutual relations. But without having proclaimed so officially, Democratic Action has shown itself in its oral propaganda and printed "literature" as hostile to the Concordat idea. Even the name of Almighty God with which our Constitution traditionally began has been suppressed in a project worked up by the vice-president of Democratic Action, who is himself one of our nation's most noted writers.

Democratic Action has also taken a sectarian position toward private education, which is largely Catholic here. Decree 321 of the Revolutionary Junta established a sharp inequality between public and private schools. When several thousand students marched with their mothers through the streets of Caracas demanding equality and justice for private institutions, Democratic Action collaborated with the communists several days later in demanding the enforcement of the decree. In this demonstration, beside hurling defiance at COPEI, including the present writer, they shouted all sorts of insults against the Church, religion, the saints, illustrious and charitable bishops and the teaching orders.

The general reaction naturally was immediate and vigorous. The Christian spirit struggled with greater zeal for the defense of its convictions. Venezuelan Catholicism desires neither special protection nor privilege, but rather respect, normal guarantees and genuine freedom. In the last ten years, ever since the death of Dictator Gomez started up the battle of ideas in Venezuela, Venezuelan Catholicism has been growing in strength. The younger clergy is hard at work and has a strong realization of social problems. Catholic Action has been organized. Feminine Youth has been particularly successful. Today, independent of any party or partisan group, there is a big campaign for women (who are voting for the first time in our history) to take an active part in the elections. Women are the most disinterested sector of the electorate and the greatest hope of the country.

A distinguished friend of mine, Professor Richard Pattee of the United States, wrote an able pamphlet entitled "Catholic Revival in Mexico." It emboldens me to speak of the Venezuelan Catholic revival. Catholicism has always been the religion of the majority of the people but hitherto it has been as if asleep. The struggle has imparted new life to it. Thousands of men receive Holy Communion in the open air on the public squares every Holy Thursday. And Catholic social works in defense and protection of the working classes are beginning to become more and more common.

It is not only for Catholicism, but for the well-being and progress of our country as well, that we desire the triumph of our ideas. For throughout the world Catholics are making clear that no one loves his country more nor serves it better than he who bears Christ in his heart.

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London Commentary

J. L. BENVENISTI

I BEGAN writing this article at the height of the Tito crisis just after the shooting down of a transport plane over Jugoslavia had roused the United States to an understandable fury. By the time these lines appear there may perhaps have been a further deterioration in Soviet-American relations, and most people in Britain are already giving anxious thought to their country's position in the event of a future conflict. Within the last few days the *Economist* has spoken of Britain in the next war as "a cockleshell shaken by atomic storms," and a correspondent in the columns of that same paper describes her as "the most vulnerable country on the earth."

All this, I fear, is only too distressingly true, and there are some who might in the circumstances be surprised at the unequivocal way in which not only the British government but the British public as a whole is lining up on the American side. Some people might say that we would be tempted to stand aloof and tend to dissociate ourselves from Mr. Byrnes's justifiable intransigeance. But this is not happening.

The most important reason is that not only the government but the great mass of the nation now know, both by instinct and experience, that if Russia were to be victorious, our own independence would not last five years. But there are also genuine ties of a different kind.

I do not think that the bond of a common language counts for much, and I would hesitate to say that the American GI was so popular in Britain as to cause us immediately to embrace any American quarrel. Indeed, there is a great deal in contemporary America that repels the English mind—the treatment of the Negro, for instance, for unfortunately few Englishmen are imaginative enough to appreciate the intense difficulties of this problem. In the province of sentiment, however, there is one factor that weighs more heavily than might be supposed.

I do not think most Americans realize how deeply President Roosevelt was beloved by quite ordinary people in Britain, and how his death filled many of us with a sense of acute personal loss. What it was about him that had this peculiar hold upon us it is difficult to say. He was, I think, a lesser orator than Churchill and lacked Churchill's flamboyant attraction, but he seemed to stand more than any of the other great wartime figures for those simple decencies in everyday conduct for the preservation of which the common people of this country really did go to war, and it is still of Roosevelt that innumerable people think when they think of America. I am not going to pretend that a consideration of this kind counts as heavily as our normal instinct of self-preservation which is the mainspring of our policy, but I think it counts, and that it is worth reporting.

There is little to draw us towards the opposite camp. As a political force the Communist Party in Great Britain simply does not exist—despite certain misleading appearances to the contrary. Thus there are a number of communists holding key positions in the trade union movement, and one of them, Mr. Arthur Horner, has just been made General Secretary of the Mineworkers Federation. But these people hold their jobs simply because they are first-rate union organizers, and for no other reason. In point of actual fact, the delegates of the very union of which Mr. Horner is now General Secretary voted against the affiliation of the Communist Party with the Labor Party at the recent Bournemouth conference.

But perhaps, after all, this whole Moscow business is not as important as it seems. Perhaps mankind, and in particular this country, may after all be spared the horrors of another war. If so, certain purely domestic issues in Britain may be fraught with greater moment for the future than the transient lunacies of the Russian government.

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I made mention just now of the trade union movement, and this brings me to a very important incident of which you may possibly have read in your newspapers. I refer to the decision, now being challenged in the courts, by the London Passenger Transport Board to forbid any of its employees, on pain of dismissal, to join any union other than that of the Transport and General Workers Union. Taken in isolation, this incident may not amount to very much. As an indication of a trend, it is, I think, very important.

The London Passenger Transport Board, I should explain, is a public corporation and is the authority responsible for all public transport in the Greater London area. It took over, when it was formed, a mass of private undertakings and has different classes of shareholders, some of whom are on an equity basis. Though subject to considerable control, the Board is still therefore in a modified way a profit-making concern.

This being so, the American may be tempted to discern here a similarity to a situation, or to be exact, to two different situations, with which he is painfully familiar. One is a demand by management that employees should join a company union, the other is a demand by workers for a closed shop. In regard to the first of these situations, however, the analogy is quite false. The Transport and General Workers Union is a genuine, large and representative trade union,

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and is, in point of fact, the union to which the vast majority of the Board's employees and some hundreds of thousands of other workers belong.

To describe this business as a demand for a closed shop is, though inaccurate, much nearer the mark, except that in this case it is not only the bulk of the workers but the management itself which finds its interest served by such a move. If an organization responsible for a huge public service has to engage in collective bargaining with any mushroom body that can collect a few hundred members, the result is obviously going to be chaos, while the advantages of having a single body to negotiate with are overwhelming.

Now, what applies here is going to apply more and more as industries are organized into large monolithic units under public control. You will get this coalescence between trade union and business interests, to which businessmen are becoming increasingly alive. You must remember that in Britain there is very little feeling on the part of big industrialists again trade unions as such, and in these circumstances one would have expected big business to throw its moral weight on the side of the large union every time.

Yet the fact is that the Tories, who are still, so to speak, the accredited representatives of big business, have not reacted in this way. Tory organs such as the *Daily Mail* have come out flat against the Transport Board and in favor of the independent unions.

Of course, part of the explanation is purely political. The Labor Party and the trade union movement are in Britain closely interlocked, and anything which would prevent an access of strength to one of the great trade unions is indirectly a blow at the Labor Party. So this quarrel makes a small but useful stick with which to beat the Labor dog.

But there is rather more to it than that. To understand what is at the bottom of this matter one must grasp the truth, which surely Americans should have singularly little difficulty in appreciating, that sooner or later the main purpose of a political party becomes not the defense of an interest, nor even of its specific original principles. Sooner or later the main purpose of a political party becomes simply the continuance of its own existence. That is happening to the Tories.

Hitherto for the best part of a century the essential line of political cleavage has corresponded to the age-old human quarrel between rich and poor. First the Liberal and then the Labor Party has been or at any rate has professed to be the representative of the underprivileged, while the Tories, broadly speaking, have been the defenders of established things and in the main of established privileges.

All this is changing, for the simple reason that the battle has been largely won by the underprivileged side, and the Tory Party, which will now probably rechristen itself the Democratic Party, having thus lost its original *raison d'être*, is, after the manner of parties, now hunting round for another. In doing so it is feeling its way towards the championship of a cause which may really want somebody to look after it, and which may provide a perfectly legitimate object for political capitalization. This cause, to put the matter quite bluntly, is nothing less than the cause of individual freedom.

I am anxious not to be misunderstood here. There is at the moment in Britain not the shadow of any interference with fundamental liberty, and the whole moral tradition of the country (a tradition by which the British Labor movement is quite as fully informed as any other section of opinion) is one which will jealously tend to safeguard personal rights. The menace of totalitarianism is nevertheless made real by the inherent logic of circumstance.

This case of the Passenger Transport Board and the Transport and General Workers Union illustrates my point very well. We have already seen the essential reasonableness, considering the circumstances of the case, of the claim that workers in any given organization should all be members of one union. The next step, however, will be the demand that union membership of all London Passenger Transport Board employees should be compulsory. This too will be reasonable. All employees benefit by the Union.

What happens after that will depend on the closeness of co-operation between union and management, a closeness which is actually likely to be increased by the degree of public spirit that actuates either body, the degree to which these bodies regard themselves, as they are more and more coming to do, as joint trustees for the public as a whole. It is perfectly possible to imagine a state of affairs where the union itself will, with considerable justification, look upon any infraction of managerial discipline as an offense against the community. If that happens, the undisciplined worker will find himself not only out of a job but out of his union membership as well, and so no doubt in course of time without any chance of further employment in his vocation.

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May I give yet another illustration of my general argument. Some time back I drew attention to the way our manpower problem was going to affect our migration policy. I pointed out that there was a danger of the most vigorous elements being drained out of the country, leaving a population consisting dominantly of the aged and the unenterprising. The *Economist* in a recent article drew attention to this danger, and in the course

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of discussing it used the following rather startling phraseology. "Every young worker," wrote that paper, "represents fifteen or twenty years of heavy capital investment in education, housing, medical services and training, and to permit these valuable assets to vanish at the very moment when they can make a return is an extremely expensive policy."

Now, everything that the *Economist* says here is quite true. But is this business of looking at one's fellow-citizens as so many investments quite healthy and right? Is there not about this whole way of talking a certain suggestion of chattel slavery, and an implied impairment of the individual's rights to dispose of himself as he pleases?

All these threats are but shadowy at the moment. They are indeed scarcely threats at all. But we have come to the point in Britain where though the moral tradition of freedom is still strong, and let me repeat, quite as strong in the Labor Government as anywhere else, we are beginning to create institutions by which, unless constant vigilance is exercised, that tradition might be undermined. The existence of a party, therefore, of which the express purpose is the maintenance of that kind of vigilance is justified.

With what success and with what sincerity the Tories—I beg your pardon, the Democrats—will accomplish this particular task remains to be seen. But the task is ready and waiting. If other and graver dangers which at present threaten the world are mercifully dissipated, as pray God they will be, this very real danger will in Britain remain, and it will be the cardinal problem of politics to find a way of dealing with it. The present writer, however, does not doubt that the political genius of Britain will rise to the occasion.

Before the Last Anointing

When death, the primeval dragon, the knowing inveterate
riverbeast with hide like a gourd
Came splashwet and shining out of the nodding ferns,
I slowly turned the pages of the album,
And remembered, idly, the gleam of water, the tree-sifted
silver at Warwick,
And the crying of the gondoliers.
I saw the satin rumps of the horses at Whitehall,
And the tourists gaping in white, empty Stratford,
And the sabots clumping in the Marken lanes.

I have no blade against the riverbeast,
My feet are slow in the tangled fern and the witnessing
briars.
In the competent teeth I remember the Lucerne air like
polished glass,
And Prince Gonzaga my beloved asleep on Rome's imperial
breast.

FRANCIS SWEENEY.

The Timeless Tales of Hollywood

JOHN P. SISK

THE NEWS—now some years old—that certain motion pictures were being selected and stored away in an archive for the information and guidance of future generations came to most of us as a pleasant surprise. Perhaps we had not expected such humane consideration for our descendants who, for all the rhetorical anxiety with regard to their welfare, have been generally expected to fend for themselves.

In this respect our children will have a unique advantage. They will be able to see the most popular form of entertainment in our time in its formal entirety. They will thus be in a position to speculate about our culture with an accuracy never before approached in the history of ethnology. By contrast, one thinks of the extent to which we ourselves may have missed the "feel" of early seventeenth century English society by not actually having seen a masque or a play by Webster.

However, some of us still feel in this matter as Swift felt, when he envisaged the English language degenerating within forty years to the point where his own work would be gibberish. Despite the advantages of formal entirety, that is, we still wonder about the intelligibility of these films, say, a thousand years from now.

For apart from the motion pictures themselves there is the climate of dramatic comprehension connatural to them, and there is within this climate a subtle and important relationship between actor and audience that will not be transmitted with the mere celluloid. This relationship is best seen in the attitude of cinematic irony, which is a major factor in the pleasure most people derive from motion pictures. In our own time the existence of this attitude has scarcely been hinted at. There is a grave possibility that failure to take it into account—to make allowances at least for its absence—will result in the bewilderment of tomorrow's scholars.

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In the first place, cinematic irony must not be confused with dramatic or tragic irony, both of which stock devices are commonly recognized and understood. Nor must cinematic irony be conceived as a tongue-in-cheek approach to life peculiar to Hollywood. Nor must it be thought of as a mature and sophisticated detachment of mind on the part of the motion picture devotee.

Cinematic irony is rather the constant awareness on the part of the audience that whatever a given actor does or says in a particular screen characterization achieves its deepest significance only when seen and felt against the background of something literally extraneous to that characterization—a something that is everything already known about the actor, not only in all previous screen characterizations but as a private citizen. To put it roughly, it is the audience in a state of not being deluded

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by and actually reveling in a multiple imposture. For there is both the make-believe of the particular part the actor is playing, and there is the make-believe of a well-known Hollywood luminary who has played many other parts now playing this particular part.

The simultaneous retention of all these literally extraneous elements in the mind of the observer charges the events on the screen with multiple significance and complex imaginative and emotional nuances, the total pleasurable effect of which is not unlike that produced by symbolistic poetry. That these elements exist in a state of meaningful contrariety, or counterpoint, to the literal and expressed event of the motion picture, and are "wittily" apprehended in such a relationship by the audience, is the specifically ironic factor in the attitude.

But possibly this cinematic irony yields too reluctantly to definition and should be seen in action. Let us take the fictitious case of the cinema actress Mary Brown.

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Let us say we are viewing a film called "Don't Take My Heart Away" in which Mary Brown is starred. In this film Mary Brown plays the part of a very plain stenographer (the circumstance is exaggerated for the sake of emphasis) to a rich and handsome young business man. Seeing Mary Brown in this unsexworthy condition can only remind us the more forcibly that she is actually an extremely beautiful young actress about whom we have a wealth of detailed information: that is, we know her physical dimensions, to what male performer she is currently married, to what extent she loves her mother, where she lives, how she looks in a bathing suit, what she thinks about the American Way of Life, how kind and considerate she is to extras and stage mechanicals, how she uses makeup, etc., etc.

At the same time, observing Mary Brown as a stenographer can only recall to us that in her previous pictures she has successively been the Queen of Spain, a pirate's mistress, a Secret Service Agent working against the nazis, a competent business woman who ran a department store, and one of the mates of Tarzan. The cinematic irony, then, consists in the realization of both the continuity and the disparity between Mary-Brown-stenographer and this composite and "other" Mary Brown. This picture, we know, is only a small part of Mary Brown. Hovering with ironic implication behind everything she says or does is the Mary Brown of the larger significance. This recognition, intensified by the actress's own simulated unawareness of implications more extensive than those of the immediate action, enriches plain Mary-Brown-stenographer with associations and overtones of meaning completely outside the literal action of "Don't Take My Heart Away."

The same thing is true with regard to the handsome young man, who eventually discovers that Mary Brown is really a beautiful young woman. With the difference of specific combinations and permutations, it is the same for any screen personality. In any given part he will be richly and ironically conceived as foiled off against his other selves.

It will be noted in the above example that the name "Mary Brown" has been used exclusively and that no reference whatsoever has been made to the name of the stenographer. This is actually in line with the thought and feeling of the audience, who apprehends the character of the stenographer not so much as a dramatic entity as another chapter from the cinematic life of Mary Brown. Hollywood publicists have been wise enough to recognize this fact and, with rare exceptions, present all screen plays to the public as further adventures in the dramatic lives of the featured actors and actresses.

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From what has been said, if anything is immediately apparent it is that the motion picture cannot be appreciated in a vacuum. What the audience sees on the screen is a small part of a very complex whole, included in which is an infinite amount of information about the topography and folk lore of Hollywood, and the lives, loves, lusts, hates, comings, goings, and dramatic endeavors of the entertainers themselves. All of these things together constitute the climate of dramatic comprehension.

And two other observations follow immediately. The conception of cinematic irony explains how a film that is in itself uninteresting—even inferior—can be received with general acclaim by the motion picture public. For the mere picture is a relatively unimportant factor in the pleasure the audience derives. The latter is able to enhance the film with the cinematic associations it already possesses, and is capable of finding a significance even in its mediocrity. As a general rule, therefore, only inferior films featuring unknown performers, who have not yet built up associations in the minds of the movie public, fail completely to satisfy.

The second corollary observation is the easy explanation of the extreme dissatisfaction some few individuals continue to express with regard to motion pictures. Motion pictures cannot but remain meaningless and even, on occasion, insipid to those who are unable to breathe comfortably in their climate of dramatic comprehension. It is as though one tried to understand modern history without having first read all of ancient and medieval history. Besides, from the most casual reading of Hollywood's most acidulous critics it is obvious that they are not only congenitally incapable of cinematic irony but even bring to motion pictures an entirely foreign type of irony.

Our fears, then, for the intelligibility of motion pictures at a much later date may be well-grounded. If some of our own contemporaries have failed to understand and appreciate this art form, what obstacles to a correct interpretation will confront scholars who may study it generations—even centuries—hence? Such purveyors to the climate of dramatic comprehension as motion picture magazines, gossip columns, biographies of the actors and actresses, and Sunday supplements will not exist for them. They will see the object completely abstracted from its sustaining environment and completely without cinematic irony.

What unwarranted conclusions might they not come to, then, when we are one with Nineveh and Tyre?

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Communications

REPUDIATION IN ST. LOUIS

Rockaway Park, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Mr. Frank Trager's long letter (August 23) should have a better reply than I can make. But since no other readers have made it, I shall try. He asks for a more precise definition of "unwise" opponents of anti-Semitism. Here are some examples:

(1) The Bureau of Intercultural Education, of which Mr. Trager was a member of the Board at least until September, 1945, when he participated in a conference in their offices. I went there to protest against the misrepresentation, in their 1945 publication, of an experiment conducted in 1940 in four public high schools and Fieldston Ethical Culture High School. The play written by Fieldston for that experiment, with a documentary approach to intercultural education on the secondary level, was judged so hate-provoking and so contrary to the stated purpose of the experiment—the development of intergroup amity and appreciation—that production in a public high school auditorium was refused by the principal. Five years later, a book written by a teacher of Fieldston offered that play as one of two successful plays written in 1940. It was never possible to secure from any responsible officer or from the Board of Directors of the Bureau an explicit statement that such material was considered invalid, although the book was not approved for purchase for New York City public schools. I did succeed in having my name removed from the preface of all printings except the first. I quote two sentences from the play: "Why, today a couple o' kids was tellin' me what the Christ-killers are doin'." "That guy, Father Coughlin, really knows his stuff. He's probably the first guy in the USA smart enough to see that if we wipe out the Jews we won't have any more trouble in the country."

(2) The groups, organized or unorganized, and the individuals distinguished or otherwise, who attacked Mr. George Timone after his appointment to the Board of Education. They were not only unwise but very confused, not sure on precisely what grounds he could be successfully attacked—as a Catholic, as an anti-communist, as having his name on the same 1936 handbill as some of the people and groups "under the ban," as having exercised his right as an American to choose the school to which he should send his children, as an "Irishman[!]"

(3) The groups, professional and lay, like the Association of Biology Teachers, the Jewish Teachers Association, the Teachers Union, the Teachers Guild, the Public Education Association, which have manifested the spirit of the lynch law which in its basest and most ignoble form leads to the murder of individuals and to the subjection of nations. Essentially it consists in the determination to substitute private judgment and vengeance for decisions legally arrived at by the duly constituted authorities.

(4) The people who believe that Jews are served by supporting attacks on Catholics, by encouraging anti-Catholic magazines, by listening to anti-Catholic speeches and records. Sinful it is to be anti-Semitic in thought or word or deed, or to be anti-Negro. Equally sinful is it to be anti-Catholic or anti-Irish or anti-any group.

Mr. Trager's letter opens up another interesting question, which should be discussed by THE COMMONWEAL—freedom of speech, its meaning, its domain, its subordination to truth, its just relation to propaganda.

MARGARET C. BYRNE.

THE STATELESS

DR. BORIS GOUREVITCH, author of "The Stateless" (September 6), has asked us to state that his estimate of 400,000 Russian refugees in France was based on data supplied by the French Government to the High Commissioner on Refugees of the League of Nations (Document A 23, 1929, VII). This high figure does not correspond to the census returns for Russian refugees and it is likely that a number of Poles and refugees from the Baltic countries and Bessarabia were included in the 400,000 figure. Through a typographical error the name of Prince Dolgorukov was misspelled, and George Podiebrad's name appeared in its French version. Dr. Gourevitch is Vice-President of the Union for the *Protection* of the Human Person.—THE EDITORS.

The Screen

Lots of Blue

IT'S JUST like continuing your vacation, after weeks of cool Colorado and the warm dry sunshine of Santa Fe, to come back to reviewing some pleasant musical films. Anyone of the items listed below should relax you—or at least give you entertainment without making you think, if that's what you want.

"Blue Skies" is chock full of Irving Berlin tunes, a few new and most of them old, but all very enchanting to the ear. They are further decorated by some gay technicolor and a rather foolish plot. Perhaps we shouldn't be too hard on the story because Arthur Sheekman's script is based on an idea by Berlin who just wanted a frame on which to hang his songs. I did, however, get a little tired of watching Fred Astaire run after pretty Joan Caulfield who runs after Bing Crosby who lets himself get caught; and then Bing, portraying an unstable though lovable fellow, continues to run after bubbles in the shape of new nightclubs which he starts and abandons. While these three are chasing through the years, they also give out with amusing song-and-dance numbers to established Berlin hits. Billy DeWolfe, aided by his bright mimicry, and Olga San Juan also carry on with romance and nostalgic Berlin favorites. The high point in singing is Bing's casually careful crooning of "All By Myself" and the title song. For me, the ultimate in clowning, in this picture which is packed with monkeyshines, comes when Bing and Fred put over a delightful new Berlin song called "A Couple of Song and Dance Men." But I found the film's biggest thrills in Astaire's two dance sequences: "Heat Wave" and "Puttin' on the Ritz."

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Continuing the blue note is *"Three Little Girls in Blue"* which substitutes youth and enthusiasm for plot values. Rather relentlessly it drums in its story about three pretty, blond fortune hunters from the farm who seek rich husbands in Atlantic City. Although all this happens in 1902 and Producer Mack Gordon gave the events lush settings in technicolor, the theme is too thin for a full-length movie. The girls, however, are rather sprightly as they bounce through their schemes, and one of them, played by Vera-Ellen, actually gives some depth to her character. The other two, played by June Haver and Vivian Blaine, manage to capture very handsome men, played by George Montgomery and Frank Latimore without either character or bounce. Vera-Ellen is more fortunate in grabbing a bellhop (Charles Smith) for a husband. He doesn't have a pretty face but he has a cute grin and a nimble wit. The picture comes to life in a big way when the whole cast moves to Maryland and Celeste Holm enters the story as a prospective sister-in-law. Her bright, off-hand manner and her lively dialogue, accented with a combination of French and Southern USA, make her first movie appearance something to cheer about.

Although not using the word "blue" in its title, *"Holiday in Mexico"* continues this week's motif for extravagant musicals in technicolor. It tries to use color intelligently and succeeds in several of the scenes in getting some beautiful effects. Some of these well-designed sequences even fit the story. This starts out as a puppy-love romance in Mexico City between the American ambassador's daughter (Jane Powell) and the British ambassador's son (Roddy McDowall), but it gets out of hand when the young girl thinks she's in love with Jose Iturbi. Mr. Iturbi plays himself—but plays the piano much better. The film's musical numbers are exceedingly good and its plot is amusing too. My only objection to the whole thing is that there is too much of everything. Miss Powell sings nicely, but she sings and sings; and Iturbi plays and plays; and Xavier Cugat leads his orchestra in some lively numbers. And Ilona Massey (a most attractive lady who is seen too infrequently in movies) sings too when she isn't busy being romantic with Walter Pidgeon who smokes a pipe. No one can accuse this production of being stingy. It's a full money's worth, if you have lots of time to spare.

"The Thrill of Brazil" is not in technicolor as you might expect, but it makes up for this by having Keenan Wynn who is one of the screen's funniest comedians. The material supplied to Wynn this time isn't exactly the best, but he does his best with it and manages to win several laughs. The old plot, about the divorced couple who really don't want to be separated but find the exigencies of show business too much for their married life, gets worked over again in this breezy musical. Evelyn Keyes as Wynn's ex-wife, Allyn Joslyn as her suitor and vice-president of Pearly Dent Toothpaste, Ann Miller and Tito Guizar help Wynn with the plot and musical numbers, both of which departments go out of their way to be risqué. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The Labor Movement

The Mayor and the Truckdrivers

MAYOR O'DWYER of New York City is an interesting man. He was elected less than a year ago as the candidate of the Democratic and American Labor parties. There was, and is, an excellent case to be made for the charge that racketeer elements control the Democratic organization of New York County (Manhattan), which is popularly, or unpopularly, known as Tammany. There was, and is, an excellent case to be made for the charge that communist elements control the ALP. For these and other reasons many New Yorkers did not vote for Mr. O'Dwyer.

Since the election, however, these citizens have been pleased to see that the Mayor has stood pretty solidly on his own feet and shown considerable independence in his relations with Tammany, the ALP and the communists. He has, for example, cut off Tammany without a cent of patronage and threatens to keep them cut off until they oust the present Neal-Stand-Loughlin leadership, which (they say) stooges for the notorious Costello, slot-machine king and key man in the Aurelio case. He also had the guts to stand up to Mike Quill and the CP's who run the Transport Workers Union, CIO, and make them back up when they threatened to strike for "sole bargaining rights" on the city system.

On the other hand, he has not gone so far as to denounce Stalinist elements in the leadership of the ALP, or to renounce that party's support. Therefore it seemed more than a little ironic to see him denouncing the rank-and-file of Local 807 of the teamsters, AFL, as being led by "communists" in their refusal to accept a compromise proposal for settlement of New York's continuing truck strike.

THE COMMONWEAL said in an editorial that this refusal to go along with the Mayor's and their own leaders' compromise was unfortunate, and then some, in view of the strike's painful effect on the public welfare. (Ditto for the operators' refusal.) But as THE COMMONWEAL also said, the part played by CP elements in the men's rebellion was small and unimportant. A few hours investigation could have told the Mayor as much, but if further proof were needed, it was supplied on the day following his statement to the press.

On that day leaders of the rank-and-file called an open-air meeting in a lot near the Holland Tunnel, a meeting attended by nearly 3,000 truckdrivers. At this meeting two communists, non-members of the union, tried to distribute leaflets. The New York *Times* reports that "as soon as the two communists appeared, the circulars were snatched from them and they were pushed roughly out of the lot. 'We want no commies around here,' the drivers yelled. A reporter from *The Daily Worker* was also barred from the lot by the strikers." And there is more about how speakers at the rally attacked both communism and the Mayor's charge.

The irony of all this, and particularly of the *Times'* handling of it, goes further than a few reflections on Mayor O'Dwyer and the ALP. Whatever you may think of the violation of civil liberties involved in the rank-and-filers' action, you have to admit that it is fairly good evidence that the Mayor's charge, so sensationally head-

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lined on the previous day even by the *Times,* was nothing but the plainest fiction. And yet the *Times* thinks that it is so unimportant that it doesn't even mention the meeting until the 13th paragraph of the piece way over on the second page, and not at all in the headline.

The moral of the story is an old one. To repeat such a moldy platitude almost brings a blush of shame to the cheek. But apparently we cannot remind ourselves too often that in this day and age the charge of "communism" is much too serious to be thrown around as lightly and irresponsibly as Mayor O'Dwyer and the *Times,* and most of the other New York papers, have lately been throwing it. Perhaps just a little more regard for the laws of evidence might be helpful all around.

They Wouldn't Believe It

As this is written, the truck strike continues, but the unions (807, 282 and 816) are signing contracts with truckmen who are willing to pay 31 cents more an hour. This is a generous piece of pie.

Over half the operators, including most of the big ones, are still holding out, but if in the end they are forced to go along, it will certainly prove that they were pretty stupid not to accept the Mayor's compromise of 18½ cents in the first place. Those who have signed insist that they will now need a boost in trucking rates of between 25 and 30 percent. Which will doubtless be the basis for other demands for price increases, and so on far into the night.

The AFL-CIO seamen's strike, now on its sixteenth day, staggers on, and assuming that it is settled soon, Harry Bridges's longshoremen and the marine engineers are due to walk out on September 30. Other workers are equally restive as living costs continue onward and upward. And through it all we are beginning to see that the labor movement was really quite in earnest when it promised a new wave of strikes if Congress scuttled a strong OPA. Congress did scuttle; labor is striking. Should we blame labor or should we blame Congress? After all, it seems logical to conclude that if Joe (business) gets his, Jack (labor) will ask for some of the same. Particularly when Jack needs it a good deal more than Joe. Conclusion: vote for a decent, progressive Congressman—if you can find one. John L. Lewis notwithstanding. In fact, the very idea of a labor leader opposed to all price control, now and in the past, is strictly such stuff as dreams are made on. JOHN C. CORT.

Books of the Week

All the King's Men. Robert Penn Warren. Harcourt. $3.00.

THE PUBLICATION of "All the King's Men" assures Robert Penn Warren of a place among the handful of novelists in America worth taking seriously. His story moves chiefly through the fabulous but completely credible political career of Willie Stark, a Southern demagogue whose personality and language are a terrifying mixture of good and evil, the scripture and blasphemy, purity and cynicism. But Mr. Warren's hero, to my mind, is not Willie Stark, but the conscience of a people—the novel is about the South, about America, and about all men in "the terrible division" of modern society—and he brings this conscience to its point of greatest awareness in Jack Burden, who is with the Boss day in and day out as intellectual hatchet-man and stooge. It is Jack Burden who tells the story and who suffers in it. Burden (the name is good allegory) is a former newspaperman; he is heir to a respected family tradition in the community; he is deeply sensitive; one of Mr. Warren's skilful touches is in the startling differences in language between Burden's speeches and his thoughts. Burden knows from the beginning that the frustration which drives him to live on Willie Stark's energy worsens in an obscure guilt. But there *is* energy in Willie Stark, there is life there, for good or for bad. And so Burden exchanges the conflict which stifles all action in him for the paradoxes of good and evil in Willie Stark. Values do not conflict in Willie; they destroy each other. His personality is the destructive element in which things are made neutral. There is no value except the dionysiac one of the brute personality itself. Values for Willie are always "just a couple of jumps behind what [we need] to do business on." So Jack Burden suffers from betrayal at the outset, and the story is the intensification of that suffering, as he is led to betray more and more. The pattern here is classic, but the timing and the astonishing climax are new, and genuinely from Mr. Warren's own hand.

The squalor which Mr. Warren reports is given literally and straight with the modest look of mere journalism, but it is saturated with a kind of Greek religious sense. His pivot is the tragic choice between not-knowing and knowing: not-knowing leaves us only the emptiness of the life lived under "the godhead of the Great Twitch"; knowing brings us the anguish of incompleteness in that separation between "idea" and "fact" which is the definition of our age. And between emptiness and doom, Mr. Warren's choice is for doom; it is, in any case, an effort, even if one dies in the effort; it is, at least, a *choice,* and emptiness is not:

> It was like the second when you come home late at night and see the yellow envelope of the telegram sticking out from under the door and you lean and pick it up, but don't open it yet, not for a second. While you stand there in the hall, with the envelope in your hand, you feel there's an eye on you, a great big eye looking straight at you from miles and dark and through houses and through your coat and vest and hide and sees you huddled up way inside, in the dark which is you, inside yourself, like a clammy, sad little fœtus you carry around inside yourself. The eye knows what's in the envelope, and it is watching you to see you when you open it and know, too. But the clammy, sad little fœtus which is you way down in the dark which is you too lifts up its sad little face and its eyes are blind, and it shivers cold inside you for it doesn't want to know what is in that envelope. It wants to lie in the dark and not know, and be warm in its not-knowing. . . . There's the cold inside your stomach, but you open the envelope, for the end of man is to know.

The explicit knowledge which one fears in the envelope, Mr. Warren described in his verse several years ago under the clearer title of "Original Sin: A Short Story":

> Nodding, its great head rattling like a gourd,
> And locks like seaweed strung on the stinking stone,
> The nightmare stumbles past, and you have heard
> It fumbles your door before it whimpers and is gone:
> It acts like the old hound that used to snuffle your door and moan.

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"You thought you had lost it when you left Omaha" and the young Jack Burden, in a beautifully sustained description of the idyllic innocence of summer-love, thought he had never seen it; but that elysium was haunted too, and in the climatic scene of this episode, he suddenly used the word "right": "And I remember the surprise I felt when I heard that word in the air, like the echo of a word spoken by somebody else God knows how many years before. . . ." It was enough to stop him in incoherence for the moment, and for just the moment needed for the older people to descend upon the house like the Eumenides. In another scene, he witnesses a neat, matter-of-fact operation to remove a piece of the frontal lobe of the brain on each side. At one point the surgeons had to do some electrocautery. Jack Burden was "fine" up to that moment. But the smell of the burning brain made him think of some horses that had burned to death in a livery stable when he was a child, and as soon as he realized that brains and horses smell alike when they burn, he "didn't feel good." One's confidence in the very seat of the Great Twitch could be shaken. This is the emptiness which Jack Burden would put behind him at all costs. And when Willie Stark is dead, Burden, who knows the worst about him, knows that he must have faith in what Stark could have done (it is inexcusable to read this passage as a eulogy of Huey Long!), for to turn from the struggle of the "man of fact" and the "man of idea" to join and complete each other—despite the doom which awaits them every time—is to reject the responsibility of our guilt and to choose not to choose. I do not think that Mr. Warren ends just there. He talks about "doom," but he seems to think that there might be a way out, a way of coming back to the innocence of the mimosas and the diving floats in the sun and the pine grove. It will be after knowledge and a painful purgation, in "the convulsion of the world" and "the awful responsibility of Time," and the book ends in the hope of it.

T. S. Eliot once complained that most modern novels are not "written." "All the King's Men" is completely written. The language does all the work. It does all the slowing down, and the speeding up; it controls all the tone and volume; and it controls the reader; you read this book not at your own pace but at Mr. Warren's. It is language that gives us not only the characters (even, in an extraordinary way, the most casual characters) but the internal "selves" within a single character. If Mr. Warren gave us only Willie Stark, we should be grateful for an important contribution to American rhetoric. But there are the accents of all the other characters. And in the thoughts of Jack Burden, one sees how Thomas Wolfe would have written if he had had flair and coherence. There is not a sentence in this book that is free of Mr. Warren's writing. For such completeness we can be doubly grateful and commend both his integrity and his generosity.

HENRY RAGO.

Island In The Atlantic. Waldo Frank. Duell. $3.00.

IT IS NOT merely coincidental that Waldo Frank's new novel mentions the Old Testament on several occasions. For it is to the Laws and the Prophets, the Psalms and the Proverbs, he has looked for an antidote to our sick world these past years. It is as though he saw in our modern dilemmas, in our age-old grappling with good and evil, a reiteration of the parables of Joseph, Ruth, Esther and Jonah.

Certainly it is no longer news that Waldo Frank is a mystic; a much beleagured mystic in these angry times, but a mystic nonetheless. In the rôle of prophet his cry of hope has become fainter in each volume until in the present work it is hardly audible. Why? Can it be that Waldo Frank is that unhappy combination of realist and mystic who recognizes "the absolute loneliness of every soul" but also "the incapacity of reason or science to heal or even touch it in even the highest civilization?"

There can be no quarrel with the symbolic literary form in which Frank has always chosen to express the despair in the modern world. In this novel covering three generations in New York, however, there will be readers who will wish Mr. Frank could have created more flesh and blood individuals and not the waxwork, frozen figures appearing in a charade against an everchanging panaramic background. Here we see the major shortcomings of his novel. All the more pity, since he shows less inclination to hyperbole and empty rhetoric than usual, and has laid on exciting incident and fascinating detail.

In fact, his admirable recapturing of old New York often serves as too sharp and realistic a contrast to his static characters, Jonathan Hartt and Evan Cleeve, suitably gloomy symbols of defeat, in the battle between the flesh and the spirit. We follow the careers of these two, one a hard-working sensitive Jew, the other a brilliant but dissolute son of a Knickerbocker family, along the opposite paths they pursue, from the Draft Riots of 1863 in New York to the sinking of the Titanic. But the scenes of old New York, its landmarks and familiar or vanished skyline, lower Fifth Avenue, the Bowery, Gramercy Park, Stuyvesant Square, Lafayette Place; its Tammany leaders and public spirited reformers, Boss Tweed, Richard Croker, Henry Ward Beecher, William Jennings Bryan, continue to hold our interest long after the narrative of the Hartts and the Cleeves has begun to drag.

Says Waldo Frank, ". . . we have a tradition, mystic and exhalted, which has not died since the Jesuits and the Puritans came to our northern shores. . . ." If those same critics who have ridiculed Frank's poetic prose were told in a loud enough voice that he was a modern Bunyan, and that no matter whom he chose to deal with—mystics, pagans, martyrs, hedonists, or masochists—his characters were all fundamentally Puritans wrestling with their conscience or their sins, there is no telling how big the wave of interest in Frank might become once it got under way. The same folk who took up the chorus, widely singing the praise of Thomas Wolfe, hailing him as the new Walt Whitman, would be not a little surprised to learn that in the midst of all the ballyhoo they had shamefully overlooked the rhapsodizings of Waldo Frank, when all the time he has been a maturer voice in the wilderness than Wolfe. True, their writings summon quite different pictures to mind. Wolfe can be visualized as a giant standing on a mountain, beating his chest and shouting, "I am a man!" Frank can also be seen on a mountain, but his arms are outstretched; he is shouting, "I love man!" However, both writers are unmistakably carried away by the eloquence of their own outpourings, which may account why on reading Waldo Frank we are forced to realize how turgid and tedious Thomas Wolfe's writing has frequently been.

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Adhering closely to the first precept of how best to deal with his conscience-stricken Puritans, Frank has drawn in the Hartt family a strikingly original portrait of the Jewish equivalent to the Gentile Puritan. They are Sephardic Jews. Mamma Hartt, for example, iron-willed, interpreting the Mosaic Laws as a "survival of the fiercest," who has little time for emotion or pleasantries in the rigid business of living righteously, sets the mood of this modern tale of puzzled Pharisees and Puritans. It is not exactly Mr. Frank's fault, but these austere Sephardic Jews so rarely appear in fiction that we find ourselves almost immediately preferring to read of their demonstrative, warmer blooded Slavic brethren.

RICHARD MC LAUGHLIN.

Secret Country. Jorge Carrera Andrade. Translated by Muna Lee. Macmillan. $2.50.
Selected Verse. John Manifold. John Day. $2.50.
The Burning Mountain. John Gould Fletcher. Dutton. $2.75.
Paterson (Book 1). William C. Williams. New Directions. $2.50.
Dublin Poems. Seumas O'Sullivan. Creative Age. $2.00.

ALL POETRY is translation, from personal, secret vision to universal speech. The writer's problem, as John Peale Bishop reminds us in his introduction to Señor Andrade's "Secret Country," is "how to make the sky blue. And he must make it really blue, restoring vividness and depth to words which, none knows better than he, have had all color washed out of them as the result of long and careless use." Jorge Carrera Andrade was born in Quito, Ecuador, and has published some seventeen volumes of verse—quite a considerable output for a poet only just turned forty. Miss Muna Lee has admirably rendered his "Pais Secreto" which appeared first in 1940. She belongs to that small group of translators who are themselves poets, and whose work refers to the original as do the circles made in water to the thrown stone. T. S. Eliot's translation of St. John Persse's "Anabase" is a now classic example; Tieck's Shakespeare is another and an earlier. The result is in every case most satisfactory, and in this particularly so, for even the stammerer in Spanish can correct and connect the sense of the English with the sound of the original on the opposite page.

Señor Andrade is everything even the bumptious, breezy Australian, John Manifold, requires. In the latter's "A Hat in the Ring" he gives his own version of Karl Shapiro's "Essay on Rime" in which he preaches to his Philistine friend the hall-marks and the uses of poetry. You use it all the time, he tells him, to rest your brains, to wallow in when you're full of beer. It must hang from the rafters, "by its canary wings." When his mother died, Señor Andrade says:

> I hanged myself haplessly with a rope of sobs
> and, calling on you, traversed the marshes of dreams,

and of the dust she is become, he says:

> You are the earth's ghost, impalpable dust
> Everywhere imponderably astride the air
> Scattering on the wind an ash of angels,

and of himself:

> here at the center I live
> Surrounded by seabirds
> to myself bound
> companion of wreckage.

In whatever language he chooses, from whatever country he comes, Señor Andrade is universal. The other four poets are all regional, and, to a greater or less extent, localized. John Gould Fletcher's "true metier is American, interior, inland United States, the land itself, the feel and meaning of it," as his dust-jacket tells us. Mr. Fletcher in "The Burning Mountain" is curiously curates-eggish: sometimes very lovesome, God wot, "these were the first lot, going through summer to this spot"; at other times he has something intrinsic to say:

> The world assembled as the sunset flared
> And night stars nooning took the waste of sky.

William C. Williams, another inland American, has collected the most delightful prose anecdotes about Paterson, some dating from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These are interleaved with comments of his own, which are chiefly characterized by the varieties of lettering and punctuation:

> PISS-AGH! the giant lets fly; good *Muncie* too
> They craved the miraculous
> scan, and it must be true. And the poet must be man
> sized and tough, and full of guts and pride
> . . . active, social, not apart
> Bold in his thought, proficient in his art.

all of which applies to Señor Andrade, who has been journalist, employee, student, professor of literature, politician, translator, consul, and is now secretary of his country's embassy at Caracas, Venezuela.

The difference between these two seems to be one of levels. A man can be poet at a few, at many, or at all levels. Mr. Manifold is indubitably a poet, his ballads are all real, and "The Griesley Wife" is absolutely first-rate; his satire, too, is neat, especially "Listening to a broadcast" with its refrain "There is no siding for the brain," and the lines to Lucasta "On seeing no immediate hope of returning from the wars":

> I cannot well refuse
> to stoop and buckle to my feet
> my pair of dead men's shoes.

Yet, compared with Señor Andrade's wholeness, the completeness of his tillage, Mr. Manifold seems merely to be scratching the soil with a hoe. Nor is it, as it might perhaps seem at first sight, a question of the just word: speech has far less to do with the universality of poetry than has sight, language than vision. As Van Gogh said to the lady who protested she didn't see a chair as he painted it: "Don't you wish you did?" It is because every one of his readers will wish they saw as Señor Andrade sees, that what he writes is universal. Of English poets he reminds me most of Philip Sidney: there is the same continual awareness of the whole—beginning, middle and end, whilst detailing and enjoying the part—the downpour of birds that falls chirping on the sown fields, or the cabbages that "lie prostrate as abbesses" after the rain, or the little barefoot bell that comes scampering out of the church.

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Seumas O'Sullivan suffers from too great facility. He is admirable when he works hard: his "Saint Anthony," "Eve and Lilith," "The Other Thief," and some of the poems "After Insurrection" are interesting, but for the most part he droolls of rainbows, cottages, roses and lamplighters, though, since he is Irish, everything he writes has an air and a lilt, and he is never vulgar.

But, after reading the others, it is to Señor Andrade that one returns, and with what delight:

> Man, nourished on years and the bodies of women
> when God spurs you, you kneel
> and only the memory of things
> lays a warmth, now useless, in your empty hands.

ANNE FREMANTLE.

Tale of The Twain. Sam Constantino, Jr. Harper. $2.50.

THE AUTHOR of the widely popular "Amen, Amen" attempts several difficult literary tasks in this earnest, compact, directly written story of two men and a girl and of two nations and the peace of the world. The scheme of the book follows two basic patterns. One embraces an exposition of certain political and social ideas, the other a romantic narrative.

The exposition is accomplished by devoting alternate sections of the book to Japanese life as it is reflected in the Matsuga family and to American life as it is revealed through the prosperous Crane family and their various friends. The Matsugas are a relatively enlightened and morally decent farming clan dwelling outside of Kobe. Through them we come to understand the mentality of the Japanese nation during the years 1940-1945. The average Japanese is represented not as an evil and corrupt barbarian, but as a simple half-educated pagan whose mind is distorted by emperor worship, a controlled education, a propagandist press, the paralyzing force of Thought Control and finally by the fanatic and omnipotent General Staff.

The Cranes on the other hand are not the exact American counterparts of the Matsugas. Nevertheless they are themselves affected by ignorance and racial prejudice. Mr. Constantino, who is an ardent admirer of the American system, writes some of his most forceful chapters on the wartime persecution of the Nisei. He is especially sensitive to the fact that this nation fought the last war partly at least to destroy the myth of racial superiority. This contrast and comparison between the two countries is the background for a tender love story which seems at times remote, rather accidental and somewhat underdeveloped.

Koyohito Matsuga fell in love with the beautiful Tana-ko Hashi but because she had white blood he could not marry her. When Tana-ko visits the United States to study, Stuart Crane, a young idealist, also falls in love with her. This marriage is also impossible for racial reasons. The three are reunited in Kobe in the last days of the war, Crane as a prisoner of war, Koyohito as a casualty in body and spirit and Tana-ko as the helpful conspirator in Crane's escape and as nurse to the ailing Koyohito. Crane leaves Kobe with the conviction that Tana-ko belongs to the east and to Koyohito.

"Tale of The Twain" is not an objective book in the sense that the author tells the story for its own sake. Mr. Constantino is passionately concerned with the danger of racism which he feels is largely the result of propaganda, and with the inherent rightness of the traditional democratic processes. He argues that, if democracy is good, it should be promoted with the same fervor as the totalitarians of the right and the left promote their doctrines. This leads him to supply Crump, the American journalist who appears to be his spokesman, with strong opinions about the treatment of subversive (anti-democratic) elements in Japan and, by implication, elsewhere. At times these opinions, however instructive, lack immediacy and tempt the reader's attention away from the author's central and courageous effort to foster peace and understanding among men.

FRANCIS X. CONNOLLY.

The Takers of the City. H. R. Hays. Reynal & Hitchcock. $2.75.

THE ever Fertile field of the Conquest of Mexico has given Mr. Hays the setting for his novel. It is a fine exposition of the work and efforts of Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas and of his noble and devoted Dominican friars.

In its historical portrayal, Mr. Hays has succeeded in bringing out admirably the contrast that existed between the cruelty of the Spanish warriors that overran the New World, and the socially advanced laws that some of the Spaniards fought for and succeeded in having passed by the Council of the Indies.

The legislation for the protection of the Indians and their rights that las Casas wrung from the Crown was a model of social justice. The conflicts that his beliefs created, the powerful interests that balked him at every turn because of the menace the new laws were to their fortunes, is very realistically brought out. Scenic descriptions are excellent and one would almost feel that the author had lived in the land as it was then.

The novel fails in the creation of its central personages, Ricardo de la Fuente, the young Spanish dandy who has to flee to the Indies because of some love affair, and Lucita, his Indian mistress who is of royal blood. They do not seem to live and the reader is anxious to pick up again the threads of the more serious historical narrative.

LULÚ VARGAS VILA.

Alexander H. Stephens. Rudolph von Abele. Knopf. $4.

ON FEBRUARY 22, 1862, a brief, austere ceremony was held out of doors near the Washington monument in Richmond, Virginia. Despite a cold, driving rain Jefferson Davis and Alexander Stephens were sworn in, respectively, as permanent President and Vice-President of the Confederate States of America. Afterwards Stephens walked back through the rain to his boarding-house. His travail as one of the highest officials in the Confederacy had begun.

This new biography of a far from well-known figure is an admirably written and well documented study. Stephens is made understandable, if not lovable. However, not even the author seems to know why it was that Stephens was made vice-president at Montgomery, Alabama, in February, 1861. Even the selection of Davis was a poor choice, as time proved. The author observes: "The Confederate States of America was set in motion, headed by a man who was disappointed because he could not be a soldier [Davis], and a man who was dubious about the Confederacy itself [Stephens]. Irony could scarcely go further."

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Stephens had at no time been a firebrand in the South. After finding teaching too difficult, he had drifted into law and polities. At all times he disagreed with those who urged seccession. True, he seemed fanatically devoted to the doctrine of state's rights, but he did not believe in the use of force. After being made vice-president, the gulf between him and Davis widened. Davis did not consult Stephens; the latter did not trust Davis. At times we know that Stephens and Governor Brown of Georgia openly opposed Davis on important issues. Stephens became very pessimistic as the tide turned against the South; he openly urged a negotiated peace while Davis was calling for all-out resistance. But Stephens, in his meeting with Lincoln at Hampton Roads, Virginia, in February, 1865, found that a negotiated peace was impossible. Lincoln was still unconvinced that there were two distinct nations on the North American continent, between Mexico and Canada. With the end of the war came an imprisonment of about five months of Stephens, and then a return to Georgia. In 1882 came the governorship; in 1883 came death to one of the most unusual men who ever entered the American political arena. This excellent treatment deserves many serious readers.

PAUL KINIERY.

Palestine: Problem and Promise. Robert E. Nathan. Oscar Gass and Daniel Creamer. Public Affairs Press. $5.00.

THE ZIONISTS are fully entitled to look upon themselves as the pioneers of material progress who have opened new possibilities of development to all branches of Palestinian economy. But it is precisely because of this that the Arabian world is driven to violent self-defense. After the First World War Palestine was still one of the most backward countries of the Near East. Into this feudal world of patriarchical relationships the Jewish newcomers have brought capitalistic and socialistic tendencies, not only as theories, but as actual facts expressed in their mode of living. For example, a world with a double standard of morality was shocked by immigrants to whom the equality of the sexes was axiomatic.

Though one cannot doubt that such occidental ideas and the social consequences derived from them are advancing slowly in the whole Middle East, it is nevertheless true that the conflict came more suddenly and obstrusively to Palestine than to other Arabian countries. The occidental world as a whole is for the Arab a distant and intangible power, but the Zionist Jew is very concrete and tangible. He is a man who imports into Palestine a new style of living and even encourages the Arabian workers to demand higher wages and to organize against their employers. By the mere fact that he exists and is increasing in number from year to year, the Zionist awakes the antagonism of the Arabian society and endangers the prestige of those who are in control of that society.

Therefore there are two sides to any happening in the Holy Land and at the same time practically no really impartial literature about Palestinian problems. This new book, also, though based upon several years of exhaustive study and on a boast to be "objective," is focussed on Palestine's potentialities for Jewish immigration and on the western potentialities of this "backward" country. It makes no bones of the Zionist desire that Palestine should become a self-governing Jewish commonwealth.

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In the framework of these political tendencies, this book is a comprehensive representation of all economies involved, and constitutes a valuable source of detailed information. The basic sources for the authors' analyses and conclusions are stated in the appendix.

MAX FISCHER.

An Introduction to the Bible. Stanley Cook. Pelican. 35c. *The Rebirth of Christianity. Stanley Cook. Pelican.* 35c. *Comparative Religion. A. C. Bouquet. Pelican.* 35c. *Civilization, Science and Religion. A. D. Ritchie. Pelican.* 35c.

THESE four paper-bound reprints are among the first of a group of British Pelican books to reach this country. Produced in England, they are imported and marketed here by Penguin Books, Inc., of New York. In format, they suffer from the use of a cheap grade of pulp paper which challenges good eyesight through 200 or more closely printed pages. However, it is the content that matters in a book, and these are meaty enough, as is to be expected from such scholarly authors. Stanley Cook, whose two volumes are companion works, is a Fellow of the British Academy and of Cambridge University. Dr. Bouquet is Lecturer at Cambridge, while Mr. Ritchie is Professor of Philosophy at Manchester University.

As is evident from their titles, all four books are concerned with religion under one aspect or another. It seems incumbent upon a Catholic reviewer to recall Canon 1399 of the *Code of Canon Law,* which expressly prohibits to Catholics "books of any non-Catholic treating professedly of religion unless it is certain that nothing is contained therein against the Catholic faith." It is a law that is apt to be resented by those who feel themselves intellectually equipped to cope with any error or aberration. Yet a knowledge of literature, art and science is no substitute for a knowledge of theology and scriptural criticism. An athlete, however rugged, should not attempt the Matterhorn without all Alpine accessories. To read such books as those under discussion, competent authority will readily yield permission when need and ability are demonstrated.

These reflections are pertinent, in view of the modernism which characterizes the religious thinking of authors Cook, Bouquet, and Ritchie. Dr. Cook, for example, in his "Introduction to the Bible," states that truth is relative; "a thing is true because of its correspondence with our experience and knowledge." Professor Ritchie, in an Alice-in-Wonderland mood, says that "dogmas need not be held dogmatically. If they are treated as provisional and if it is admitted that they are ambiguous, they are useful and indeed necessary." Dr. Bouquet, an Anglican divine, pays scant homage to scriptural Inspiration when he says, "The stories of the magi, of the shepherds, and of the massacre of the children . . . may easily contain a substratum of fact, although they may also have been shaped in the course of telling to fit the demand of proof-texts." There is no question as to the sincerity of the three authors as truth-seekers, but their books give the impression of a groping rather than a questing, toward an ever-receding goal.

LEO J. TRESE.

India's Population. S. Chandrasekhar. John Day. $2.00.

THIS BOOK of 117 pages is of value chiefly for the statistics it contains, statistics which give a rather grim picture. In normal times 60 percent of the population have a per capita income of only 2 cents a day, and

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perhaps a hundred million are habitually hungry. With careful distribution there is sufficient food for only 330,000,000 out of the 389,000,000 people in India, although of the total cultivable area of 432 million acres, only 278 million acres, 64.4 percent, are under cultivation.

With utilization of all the cultivable land and with increased efficiency in agriculture India could, it is estimated, support a population of 447,000,000. With industrialization and trade giving India food from surplus countries, in exchange for things India could make, a still greater population could be supported. "There would be no need to complain about the Indian population problem were not the qualitative aspect so far from desirable."

The impression given the American public about the density of population and its rate of increase by superficial writers in popular magazines is shown to be false. The density of population in India is considerably lower than it is in Germany, Japan, England and Italy. "The increase was 10.6 percent during the decade 1921-1931 and 15 percent for the last decade, 1931-1941. The population of the United States, for instance, increased 16 percent during the decade 1920-1930 . . ."

The book would have been better if the author had been more careful to give others credit for facts he retails and if the author, who has had unfortunately little opportunity to gain sobering experience in the land of his birth and youth, had restrained his impulse to crowd the little book with a host of recommendations for alleged reforms.

MICHAEL D. LYONS.

Slow Dawning. Jane Howes. Herder. $3.00.

JANE HOWES is the pseudonym of a convert who gives us, in "Slow Dawning," an account of her nine-year pilgrimage to the baptismal font. That she is a wife and mother, with a university background, are the only biographical facts that emerge from her book. It is an odyssey that takes us, hurdle by hurdle, over the difficult course that stretches from agnosticism to faith. It is a singularly good piece of work, even in a field of literature that has been blessed with many fine apologias. Jane Howes's style has a down-to-earth intimacy, and her examples have a pin-point acuteness that are reminiscent of C. S. Lewis at his best—without that gentleman's uncertainties.

Human nature being indeed what it is, the fact that the author is a woman and anonymous at that, may retard recognition of the book's excellence. But the excellence is there. The chapters are short, the thoughts are honest and vigorous. How it may appeal to non-Catholics I cannot say; but Catholics, layman and priest alike, will find "Slow Dawning" an easy book to read and a hard book to lay down.

The Process of Persuasion. Clyde R. Miller. Crown. $2.00.

DR. MILLER is founder of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis which has served for many years in exposing the shoddy tricks of prominent mountebanks offering a spurious product to the American public. Although he ignores in the present book the classic, systematic treatises of rhetoric, he describes out of his wide experience the process of persuasion actually at work in good, bad and indifferent causes. It should prove helpful for those with a problem of persuasion on their hands.

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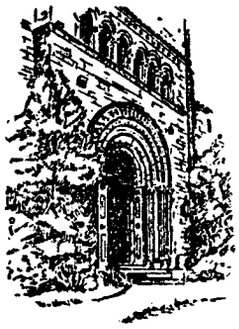

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SEMINARY—Four Year College Preparatory
Dunblane Hall—Grades 1 to 8. Address: The Secretary.

The Inner Forum

Rural Life Meet

THE FIVE DAY convention of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference at Green Bay, Wis., opening October 11, promises to be the most impressive in that enterprising organization's first quarter of a century. Participants are expected to include 30 bishops, 1,000 priests and nuns and 10,000 laymen, chiefly farmers and their families. There will be special conferences for diocesan rural life directors, for farmers in general, on family-type farming, for youth groups, war veterans, and national farm organizations. And throughout there will be special emphasis on the democratic process of discussion from the floor with strictly enforced time limits on all speakers to keep the proceedings moving. Executive Secretary, Msgr. Luigi Ligutti of Des Moines, Ia., is primarily responsible for the organization's success.

The leading principles of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference were formulated by Bishop Edwin V. O'Hara of Kansas City, Mo., when he was a priest laboring in Oregon City. They are fourfold. First, to care for underprivileged Catholics living on the land in spiritual, economic and social matters. (2) To encourage Catholics already living on the land to remain there (especially to make rural life as a whole so enterprising, satisfying and enjoyable that the young people will not want to migrate to the city). (3) To increase the number of Catholics who are living on the land by encouraging well planned resettlement. (4) To convert people in rural areas—particularly the large proportion who have no religion whatsoever—to become Catholics.

Emphasis at the Green Bay convention is therefore on all aspects of rural living. On two of the nights there will be folk dancing on a large scale led by the Ladies of the Grail of Loveland, Ohio. Another night will be devoted to "rural culture," with music, one-act plays, novelty numbers and community singing staged by farm boys and girls.

It is characteristic of the efficiency of the Rural Life Conference that the important discussions on cooperatives will be led by experienced representatives from St. Francis Xavier University of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, whose Extension Department has recorded such remarkable achievements in the field of credit unions, consumer and producer cooperatives and consequently in adult education of a vital sort throughout the past decade.

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